Sustainable flood alleviation in the Stroud Valleys: an investigation into a multi-benefit, community-led approach to water management

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1. Introduction
To tackle regular flooding from the Slad Brook, Stroud, the Environment Agency (EA) has proposed a Flood Alleviation Scheme of two seasonal reservoirs costing c. £500k. This study builds on work by Water21 in direct response to:
- EA requests for alternative or supportive options to manage flooding, biodiversity and climate change resilience.
- Community and landowner requests to provide flood storage in turn for additional "multi-benefits".

5. Five key findings
1. Land management measures can reduce runoff by 10-15% – providing Climate Change resilience to EA scheme
2. Restoring historic mills can have cumulative contribution to flood storage – whilst giving viable renewable energy
3. The community-led approach has fostered good relations – new multi-benefit opportunities opened up
4. Multi-benefit approaches encourage participation – by providing flood storage in return for water resources
5. But: Flood storage capacity required by EA not yet met by these measures – many more landowners are required

The benefits of individual “win-win” cases should not be underestimated